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*Camping
with
Henry*

F.H. Cheley

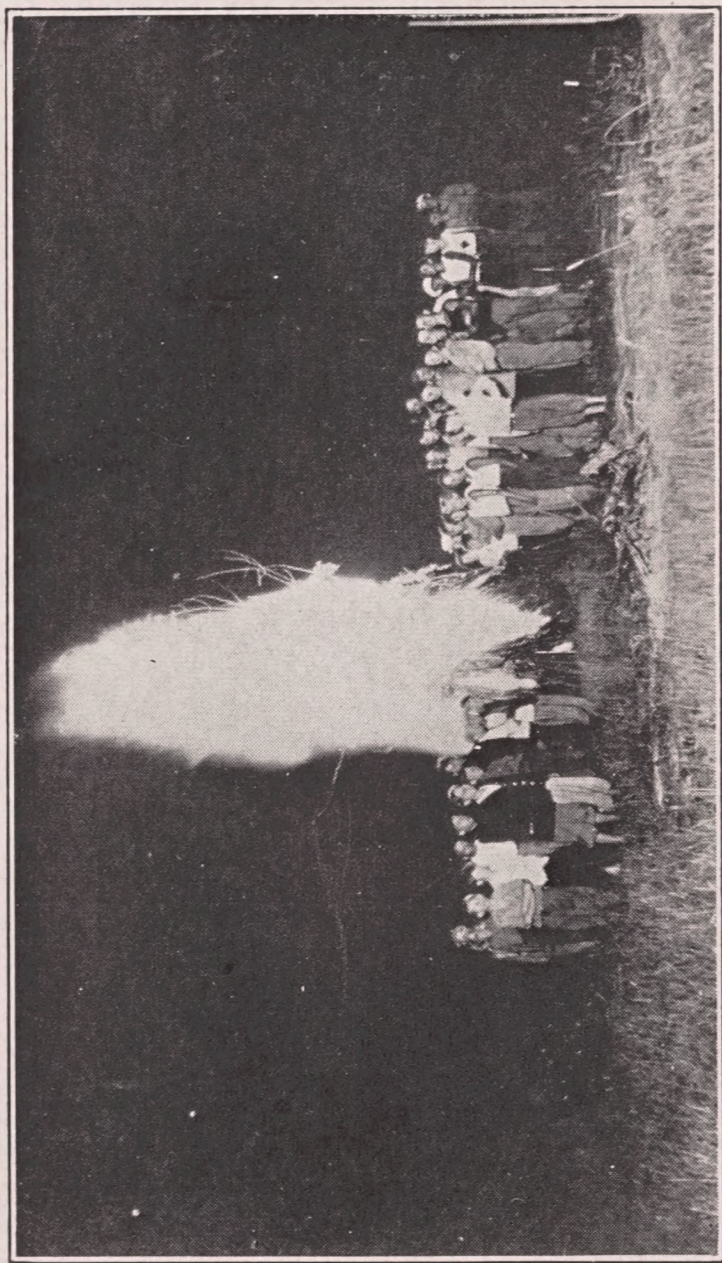


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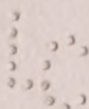
COMRADES IN CAMP

Camping With Henry

STORIES FOR THE CAMP FIRE

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Hobart*
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Brother Investment," "The Adventure of a
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tivities," etc.*



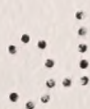
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IN REAL APPRECIATION OF A THOU-
SAND LITTLE FAVORS DURING THE DE-
VELOPMENT OF CAMP EBERHART, THESE
YARNS ARE DEDICATED TO MY FRIENDS
THE KNEVELS

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STORY I

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
GOES CAMPING

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IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
GOES CAMPING

In spite of himself Henry already felt a bit lonesome. He could see his mother's tear-stained face, and hear her last words ringing in his ears as the Airline train pulled out and actually started him on his way to a real summer camp for boys.

"Be sure to be very cautious about the water, son, and don't get lost in the woods. If your nose stuffs up, apply the ointment as I showed you, and be sure to write me a big letter every day, for mother will be so anxious to know about everything. Be careful about sunburn. Don't eat too much, and be very sure——" But they were out of hearing now, and all Henry could see was a frantically-waving handker-

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chief and a group of blurred people; in spite of himself a tear had stolen into his own eyes, for he was leaving her behind for the first time in his life. He had fairly lived in a strange fantastic world for weeks, planning, and imagining, and getting his camp kit together, and even now, as he settled into the red train cushion, he could hardly realize that he had actually left them all behind or that he was headed straight for Michigan's lakes and low rolling wooded hills, where he was to spend the summer in a modern boys' camp along with a hundred other lads, none of whom he had ever yet seen.

Five minutes after leaving the station he eagerly consulted his new dollar watch, and, to his amazement, found it would be at least four hours before he would reach the little camp station. Just how best to occupy himself during that enormous expanse of time was the immediate

question. As he sat gazing out of the window, yet without seeing anything in particular, the endless chain of advice that his mother had been giving him the last two weeks, about where to put this and that, and what to do when so and so happened, began afresh to flash into his already crowded brain; for, being a live, reasonably vigorous American youth, he had *some* ideas of his own about what a boys' camp was like and how a fellow ought to behave. Hadn't he read every camp story he could lay his hands on in the neighborhood, from "Four in Camp" to "Two Little Savages," and fairly devoured the camping number of every boys' magazine at the Library?

"You'd think I was going into the heart of Africa," he said, at last, half aloud, with just a trace of self-satisfaction in his voice. "A fellow ought to be a regular Edison dictaphone to remember half of the

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instructions that have been given me. I'm just like all other kids, I guess, that have been born and raised in a big city, and if they get on, I can. But who ever heard of such foolishness—four pair of pink pajamas, and enough linen handkerchiefs to wipe every boy's nose in camp *three* times a day!" Then with a wink, and a determined gesture, he added, "The bottom of the trunk for all that junk first thing. Imagine Daniel Boone, can you, in pink pajamas wiping the perspiration from his sun-browned 'physiog' with a two-by-four scrap of initialed linen!" He smiled out loud. "And to think of Kit Carson ambling down to the shore of the lake each morning in a bathrobe and slippers! I'll bet the rest don't even wear a bathing suit. Such things would shock 'Momsey' to death."

Thirty minutes later he suddenly roused himself from his reverie

and again consulted his shining time-keeper. "Hum!—ten forty-seven. Well, that's nearly noon. Think I'll take a whack at that lunch 'Momsey' fixed. I was so busy getting my trunk off to the station this morning that I forgot to eat a bite of breakfast. I heard 'Momsey' tell Nora to fix it right, 'cause like as not it would be the very last bit of decent food I'd get for some weeks." He smacked his lips in anticipation of that fried chicken and cherry pie, as he got up and surveyed his numerous boxes and packages. There was father's precious fishing-rod that he had caught so many monstrous fish with, back in *his* boyhood days. There was the Scout Manual and the latest book on woodcraft and camping that Nora had found after the trunk went to the station; his hat, coat, sweater, a rain coat, his home-made sail, yes, and his kodak, that

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just wouldn't go into the trunk, and a box of fudge that Nora had sent along to remind him of her when he got to living on baked beans and stewed prunes and boiled potatoes.

Twice he made a mental inventory, but to save his life he could not locate that lunch box. Then, like a flash, it came over him, he had left it on the ticket window when he bought his ticket. His heart sank suddenly and disappointment filled his face.

"Hum! Imagine Daniel Boone going off and leaving his lunch behind!" he mused. "I'm a greenhorn, that's a fact. Hope 'Momsey' don't find it at the station; she'll worry herself sick thinking of me starving on this train."

Just then the conductor asked for his ticket, and after three careful searches in every known pocket he was about to give up in disgust and pay the conductor a second

fare, when he located the ticket tucked well away in his new pocket book. The conductor smiled. He had been taking up tickets to Camp Pokokoko for several seasons and had seen this little performance of lost ticket many times before. Besides, he had a boy of his own.

“Haven’t you any baggage, Sonny? I see your ticket isn’t punched,” he said kindly. “Most of these boys have a trunk along or at least a home-made camp box.”

“Yes, I have one,” said Henry, a strange fear suddenly gripping his heart, “but—but, by Jiminy, I forgot to check the thing, and—well, what do you think of that! Too blamed many friends came along to get me started this morning, and they got me rattled. I was just on my way to have it checked when my auntie stopped me to tell me for the twenty-ninth time to remember just how to take the little red pills, in

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case a poisonous viper bit me. Oh, Gee! Now isn't that a pretty mess? Going camping, and this is my wardrobe. I'd scare all the game out of the Zoo with this rig on. Say, Mister, how far is it back to the city?"

"Entirely too far to walk, son," laughed the conductor. "All you can do now is to telegraph from Niles and have it come on to you by express."

"Telegraph?" Oh, that would never do," said Henry. "Auntie would die of heart failure before they even got the yellow envelope open. Oh, I know, I'll send it to Dad's office—but, say, he'd kill himself laughing, and I'd just naturally never hear the last of it. He told me only last night that I'd forget to go to my own funeral one of these days, and that he'd wager I'd need three fellows to pick up after me every day at camp. No, Sir, I'd

rather go naked than wire Dad! But what can I do?"

"I'll look after it, Sonny," said the conductor kindly. "I'll wire the agent, and you can pay for the telegram. I reckon your name was on it?"

Henry nodded, a pleased expression beaming on his face. "Yes, Sir—Henry Wadsworth Ruggles. It was a steamer trunk. Wish you could get me my lunch, too, but you can't. Thank you a thousand times for your kindness. I think you must have a boy at your house. I hope that is the last thing I've forgotten. I wouldn't have minded so much if I had just forgotten some of that advice about what to do in case of sunstroke or if I broke my leg while I was alone on a mountain, or some of the rest. Say, most women haven't any confidence in a boy at all and yet they run a mile, hollering all the way, when they see a mouse."

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At the next station a happy crowd of sturdy, healthy lads boarded the train. They were all clad in camp clothes, and as soon as they were once settled, began their songs and yells to let everybody know just where they were going. Henry listened eagerly to all their conversation, but had no thought of going up to where they were and telling them that he, too, was bound for Camp Pokokoko. The conductor, understanding at a glance, again came to his rescue by tipping the new crowd off that Henry was also to be a brother camper.

Fat Templeton and Duke Smith promptly appointed themselves a committee to make Henry's acquaintance, and in a few moments had him in the party, trying their best, boy fashion, to make him feel at home. He answered their flood of questions with courtesy, and tried to make himself agreeable, but it

was difficult, for some way they were different from the boys he had known. He liked Foxie and the chap they called Lefty, and Shrimp Tod; but there were several others who, he felt confident, were trying to have fun at his expense, and it nettled him. Yet somehow, they seemed to know just how to do everything. They talked of who was to win the Aquatic Medal that season, of the Leader of this tent and that, and the possibility of a game with boys from the town; of whether the tennis courts would be in shape or not, and of who would be Captains of the various canoe crews. Every single boy seemed to be a seasoned camper and to know all about everything; they were discussing just now what was the very best way to fry an egg on a flat stone, and many other of the fine points of woodcraft.

To poor Greenhorn Henry, their knowledge and achievements seemed

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to mount high, and he had borne in upon him with tremendous force the one bit of advice his father had offered. "Get into the game, kid," he had said. "Smash the line hard. No doubt you're green, but you can learn. Keep your eyes open, and your mouth shut, and do things. You'll soon make a place for yourself. Don't ever say you 'don't know,' and if you even think 'can't' then you are no longer a son of mine."

There was just one thought in Henry's mind now as the train sped on. He must watch for his chance and accomplish some one worthwhile thing, and then he felt sure this bunch would take him into that inner circle of fellowship where he so craved to be, and look upon him, too, as a thoroughly seasoned camper. He could think of nothing in all the world so desirable, just then, as to be a really honest-to-goodness mem-

ber of that gang of stalwart, self-reliant boys who could really do things. To do it, he must achieve; and thereby hangs my story, for little did Henry Ruggles then realize of the experiences that were to come to him on his quest for favor with the gang—he, an over-confident city chap in a democratic boys' camp, where leadership is determined by achievement and not by mere talk or family name.

He was assigned to Tent Eight, along with Foxie, Texas, and some of the others, and as his trunk would not be along until the evening train, he removed his white collar, rolled up his sleeves so as to expose his pink arms, and started out to investigate. It never occurred to him that he could have gotten much useful information about all sorts of customs and practices of the camp for the simple asking. However, he just assumed that it was up to him

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to find out about things himself, and so he started. To be sure, the Camp Chief and his own tent leader had been very gracious to him and made him feel at home, yet there was a host of little things he wanted to know about, and why ask any one? He did not frame it into thought. Perhaps he was not even conscious of it himself, but in reality the one thing that he was very touchy about was the fear that some boy who didn't know who he was would discover there were some things that he didn't know a thing about, and might, by accident, take him for a greenhorn and make sport of him. There was one thing that must be protected at any cost, as he thought, and that was his youthful pride.

He personally inspected the ball diamonds and tennis courts, the tent street, the dressing locker, the chute-the-chutes, the fleet of trim steel

boats, and the canoes. He went carefully over the Lodge from office and store to commissary, and made his name known to Sam Doolittle, the chef, and even volunteered the information to Sambo that his father was General Sales Manager for the largest wholesale spice company in the country, and that he would ask his father to ask the president to ship a hundred pounds of pepper at once, of course, if the chef would like to have it, or perhaps a barrel of vanilla or a keg of mustard.

Fortunately the chef declined with a smile and Henry went on his way.

Soon he was in the woods skirting the swamp. It was his first hike into such country alone in his life, and in spite of his determination he was just a bit squeamish. His ears were very alert for any sound of wild beast, and he was thinking as he hurried on of the story in the last issue of his favorite boys' mag-

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azine, of how a lad like himself had nearly been swallowed up in the quicksands of just such a swamp, and would have perished if it had not been for his forethought and camp training, which prompted him to unwind his rope quickly from his hips and throw a loop over a convenient low limb, tying himself so that he could not sink completely out of sight in the sucking sand. He was wondering what he would do under some such circumstances, as he wandered on into the low willow rushes and cat-tails, fascinated by the smells and sounds that were everywhere about him.

From the trees the crows laughed at him. Twice he threw a dead chunk at them to scare them away, for they nettled him. Some way he seemed to realize that even the birds recognized him as a greenhorn. Once he nearly fainted when a monstrous bullfrog, that had been sunning

himself on a lily pad, let out a terrific croak and dived into the green water just ahead of him. Without being conscious that he had really cried for help until it was over, he suddenly found himself wildly scrambling up into a tree to escape the "poison fangs" of a large lazy water snake, that had glided right between his feet. His heart was beating at a terrific rate, and he was wet with perspiration. When he realized his mistake, he was thankful that he had come all alone and that no one really knew what a coward he was about snakes and things.

He was preparing to descend to the ground again, and start back to camp, when he heard a very odd noise just beyond a large dense clump of willows. First the bushes would rattle suspiciously, and then he would hear a muffled sound like a dog gnawing a bone. He was in a real swamp—there could be no

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mistaking that—so it might be almost any sort of a beast. He knew that moose inhabited Michigan lakes, for he had just been reading in his last Sunday's Sunday school paper, of one that had attacked a boat with three fishermen in it and killed one of them before the other men could get at their guns. Now he had no gun, and he suddenly became conscious that the tree that was holding his trembling form was nothing but a slender sapling and would stand no battering from the horns of a great bull moose. Should he jump and run? That would be very unwise, for he had but two legs, very wobbly ones at that, while the moose—and he was now satisfied it was some huge beast, from the way it thrashed the bushes about—had four. What were his chances under such circumstances? No, to run would be to betray his presence. He must slip down very quietly

and work his way out of the timber, keeping the clump of willows always between him and the beast. "A boy has brains," he reasoned, "but a moose acts only from instinct; and surely brains could win in such a contest, especially if the animal didn't know that the game is going on."

He was wondering if his aunt had given him any advice about what to do under such circumstances, as he slipped noiselessly down the tree and worked his way toward a clump of cat-tails. Every step he took the blackbirds rose in droves and scolded and chattered, until he was certain that that moose would catch on that something unusual was happening under his very nose and would start investigating. In case that happened he was lost. He had made just three quick moves from clump to clump, when that very thing did happen. The animal seemed to sense another

presence than its own and stalked forward to inquire. Henry stood stone-still for fully thirty seconds, trying to make up his mind what to do. Every second he could tell, by the bending of the willows, that the huge beast was coming nearer. He was out on well-sodded land now. Running, if he had to resort to that, would be much easier he was sure, and he was confident he could make a good showing for at least a short distance.

He worked his way to the end of the clump behind which he was hiding, and cautiously peeped out to get just one glimpse of the beast. He fancied just how it would look—its eyes red and gleaming, its huge shovel horns lowered for the charge. He crept nearer and nearer. Then suddenly he straightened up with an exclamation. There before him munched three Jersey cows. He could hardly believe his own eyes,

but there they were. They gazed at him out of their big kind eyes, and then continued to pull at the tender shoots of willow, just as if Henry had always been standing where he was.

He laughed a dry laugh and started on. He had had a bad scare, but once more he was thankful there had been no companions to witness his fright. He was just emerging from the woods when two big crows flew up and laughed a derisive laugh at him. This time he was positive they called him "Greenhorn!"

It was growing late. The sun had set. He must not miss his supper, for he was starved. He would just take that short cut, cross that field, follow that old rail fence and save a long walk. He started at a trot and soon came to the fence. He was sure it led directly to camp, yet he heard not a sound. He hurried on. The fence led in and out

of more or less thick patches of second growth. He had been jogging along for half an hour when, emerging from some heavy growth of low young trees, he came into a little clearing, and spied before his very own eyes four big turkeys roosting on the top rail.

“Wild turkeys!” he cried, under his breath. “Ah, I am a lucky man. This is my chance to make good. Turkey will taste good in that camp. Those fellows are all too busy talking about what they *have* done to know what prizes are running about under their very noses. I must not fail to get at least two. But how? I have no gun. Gun! Rats! Do you think Robinson Crusoe would have let wild turkeys get away even if he had no gun? Never. Me for a goodly club!”

He carefully retreated and began the search for a stout club. After several moments of spying around

he found just the thing—a stout hickory sapling. He reached into his pocket for his knife, only to remember that it was in his trunk. He bit his lip furiously. Was he to be beaten after all, with “opportunity” camped in his very front yard? *No!* And back he went farther until he came upon a dry club that he thought would serve his purpose.

“Wild turkey!” he thought, as he advanced again. “The old Pilgrim Fathers had nothing on me. I’ll bet these birds have been to roost an hour. I’ll slip up close, make a charge, club in hand, and get at least one. Why, that gaunt trapper in Alaska killed twenty wolves that way, just by keeping his head. I ought to be able to get a turkey.”

There they sat, four as splendid fat, grain-fed turkeys as you would ever want to look at. For a year they had seen men come and go, and no one had ever molested them.

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Every day some party of the camp boys would come across them, but these boys were *campers*, and had long since learned to respect the property of all the neighboring farmers, so they just sat and watched the slowly approaching figure with curious eyes. Not until the first one of their number toppled from the rail with a broken neck did they sense any danger, but when they did, the young hunter's chances faded in a second, for the remaining three turkeys were gone. He gave chase, but it was no use, they were soon out of sight.

Wildly Henry clutched his precious prize, clubbing it severely about the head, for fear it might be playing possum. Then gathering it up by its feet he flung it proudly across his shoulder and started for camp. Never did a hunter return to the camp of his fellows with more pride and satisfaction than did Henry that

evening. His head was high, his chest was out. He had killed a real wild bird single-handed in the wilderness, without so much as a knife or pocket hatchet; all with his wits and determination. Surely now they would hail him as one of them and have him tell of his exploit, perhaps about the camp fire that very evening.

The boys were seated at supper when he arrived. The Camp Chief was the first to see him coming and went out to meet him, unable to determine from a distance just what the lad had on his shoulder.

"Son, didn't you hear the last call to mess?"

"No, Sir," panted Henry. "I was away in the woods and did not hear. I hope I am not too late, Sir."

"You are quite too late, my boy. We serve but one supper and late-comers go hungry. Supper is just over. And wherever did you get

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that turkey—did something run over it?”

“I killed it, Sir, with nothing but a club.”

“You killed it! Why, what do you mean?—Where?”

Henry told as best he could, his lip quivering, his voice faltering. He had been received with so little enthusiasm and he could not understand it.

The other boys were crowding about now, eager to hear the story.

“Why, that’s the cock to Mr. Knevels’ flock of prize turkeys,” said Duke. “What happened to it, anyway? Mr. Knevels will feel so badly. I heard him say only yesterday that that bird was worth fifty dollars any day.”

“This chap killed it,” said the Chief, smiling in spite of what he felt. “No doubt he thought it was a wild bird. Did you, Henry?”

Slowly Henry's lips curled, and then the tears came in a torrent.

"O, yes, Sir, I did. And I'm so sorry. Wasn't it a wild one? I never saw a turkey out of a meat market before. I thought they were always wild. Oh! What shall I do?"

The Chief led the Greenhorn away to save him from the wild cheers and laughs that were now coming from a dozen different groups. When well inside his office he reassured the sorrowing boy.

"I'll go with you in the morning and we'll adjust it as best we can with Mr. Knevels. It will be difficult, but it's the first thing that has ever gone wrong, for we have been so careful to teach our boys to respect property, but he will understand. Your father will no doubt have to settle for the bird."

"Oh! And will Father have to know it, too?" sobbed Henry. "I—I wish it could be fixed some other

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way. Perhaps the farmer would let me work for him on the farm to pay for it instead of telling Father."

Henry went to his tent to avoid the crowd and wait for the Camp Fire, but his boy's heart was heavy indeed and he had never been so lonely before in all his life.

STORY II

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
JOINS "THE ANCIENT ORDER
OF STUCK-UPS"

STORY II

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES JOINS "THE ANCIENT ORDER OF STUCK-UPS"

"We'll have to force the lock, boy, it's the only way I can see out of it," said Henry's tent Leader, who had just finished trying every trunk key in the camp on Henry's newly-arrived trunk. The boy looked despairingly at the group of giggling boys gathered about his tent.

"It's a brand new trunk. I hate to break it," he murmured, "'cause Sister is going to use it when I get home. I can't see where my keys went, for I'm sure I had them after I got on the train."

The Leader wiped the perspiration from his brow and started to get the screw driver and hammer. It was not the first trunk he had had to

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force open that season, and in spite of his good nature it tried his patience just a little.

Far out on the point the evening camp fire was being lighted. The clear notes of the bugle called the boys to assemble. Henry hastily unpacked, spread his bedding quickly on the bunk, and took special pains to see to it that his pink pajamas were carefully concealed in the bottom of the trunk.

"I'd be the joke of this camp if Foxie and the rest should ever find *those*," he sighed. "Tomorrow I'll smuggle them into the woods and hide them in a hollow tree."

"Last call for the Camp Fire!" cried one of the Leaders, as he hurried past the tent. Henry dropped everything and followed, for he had been late once that day already. He sat down well at the back of the happy crowd, to see just what the order of events was to be; and then,

too, he felt just a bit bashful, since he knew that the turkey story had gotten pretty well around the camp.

Mr. Whitehall, the Camp Director, stood by the fire making his announcements and calling special attention to many little things that had developed out of the day's experience, closing his remarks with this suggestion:

"I realize that there are many of you boys that have never been camping before, and of course we don't expect you to learn it all in a day; but do, for pity sakes, ask about things you don't know about, and remember this: 'if in doubt, find out.' It will save you trouble, and me gray hairs and hours of sleep." Just here he noted a boy sneaking quietly along just inside the circle of light, evidently intent upon some mission. In his hand he held a stout club, and he looked neither to the right nor left. The Camp Chief stopped short and smiled in spite of himself.

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“Foxie, what on earth are you doing now?”

Fox held up a finger to urge absolute quiet, and then with his hand held to his mouth he breathed in a hoarse whisper: “Sh--h-h, can’t you? Don’t you see that flock of turkeys yonder? They are wild birds from Madagascar!” With that he stalked on after his imaginary birds. Every boy shouted himself hoarse, and for a moment pandemonium reigned. Henry felt his face flush, and no doubt he would have been angry if Texas, who was sitting right next him, hadn’t nudged him and with a shy wink said:

“Don’t mind him, kid. He’s got to have his fun, no matter at whose expense; we’ll get him yet.” Henry squeezed his hand gratefully, for he knew he had at least one friend and it was the most comforting experience of the day.

After the fun had subsided, some

one with a mouth-organ struck up "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," and the hundred happy boys took it up with such enthusiasm that they could be heard across the lake. Verse after verse was sung, closing with the popular home-made parody that had special meaning to every boy:

"Last night as I lay on my pillow,
Last night as I lay on my cot,
Last night as I lay on my pillow,
I dreamed a mosquito I got"—

every camper clapping his hands on the last line to suggest the slaughter of droves of imaginary mosquitoes. Next came "The King of the Cannibal Islands," "Polly Wollie Doodle," and many others that always delight a camp fire crowd.

The last strains had hardly died away when Fat became the center of attraction. He had seen something move, so he said, in the big oak just at the edge of the firelight. In a second a dozen, then twenty, and

finally a great group of boys were following his directions and gazing into the tree tops.

"What does it look like, Fat?" questioned Lefty.

"It was a big bird," breathed Fat solemnly, "but now it's gone."

"Humph! 'spose it was an ostrich," said Texas disgustedly. "Get something new, can't you? Everything that flies around here now will be a turkey. A dollar for some originality."

The circle was again seated about the fire and a tent Leader took charge.

"We have a number of candidates to take into 'The Royal Order of Stuck-Ups' tonight," he said, and in a second all was quiet, while he went on. "Now, for the sake of you new arrivals, let me say that this dignified Order is the most important one in camp, and to belong to it is a great distinction. Its members are,

of course, the elite of the camp, and to be left out of its royal membership is a positive indication that you are decidedly lacking in courage and personal bravery. No 'quitter' has ever been given the glad hand, and so far as I know, no member of the noble band has ever failed to make good in the most trying of circumstances. The wise and powerful Executive Committee, met in long and secret session, seated about the 'Mystic Paddle,' have, after due deliberation and the most thorough consideration of evidence available, elected unqualifiedly to membership the following four boys: James McCartney, Ralph Blain, William Spencer, and Henry Ruggles."

Somebody tittered, but was promptly brought to order by Foxie, who had only a week before been elected to the high position of the "Supreme Keeper of Silences" for all regular meetings of the "Stuck-Ups."

“Now, if these four candidates will kindly come forward,” continued the Leader, “we will administer the sacred rites and instruct them in the privileges of membership. Will the Order kindly arise and form a circle about our candidates while we go through the customary ceremony?”

The four boys suddenly found themselves in the center of one hundred eager, solemn lads, who crowded close to see the performance. The candidates were arranged in a square, each boy facing in and just far enough from the lad opposite from him so that when they bowed they would not crack heads. The candidates were eager and very solemn, ready to promise anything that might be asked of them.

“Will the Royal Inquisitor come forward?” said the Leader, at which a second Leader advanced and took his place in the center of the square formed by the candidates.

"Is the Royal Order ready to accept these candidates into membership?" he asked.

"We are, Sir!" shouted the crowd.

"Go cautiously," urged the Royal Inquisitor. "Are you sure there is no cowardice in these candidates and no false pride? Are you confident they are thoroughly imbued with our motto of 'Other Fellow First'? Are you certain they will never stain the fair name of Poko-koko? Have you carefully considered the possibility of one of them losing his temper when put into a tight place in a ball game or on a hike? Oh, mighty men of valor, think hard before you finally cast your vote in their favor! They are young, and *green*, and inexperienced; they are conceited, and selfish, and boastful; they are untried—what say you?"

"Give them the oath!" cried the circle gleefully.

"As you command me," said the

Royal Inquisitor softly. Then turning to the candidates he said, "Repeat this after me in clear voice and in unison:

" 'I give my word of honor that I won't crab, that I'll play square, fight hard, and be a real sport; that I'll keep my speech clean and my thoughts right, and that, in so far as lies within me, I will return good for evil. If I fail, I will cheerfully acknowledge my mistakes. And my motto every day shall be—To Grow; so help me Shades of Poko-koko!' "

The boys solemnly repeated the oath as ordered, and then stood eagerly at attention.

"Now to prove that you mean business," said the Royal Inquisitor solemnly, "I will place our copies of this written oath on the royal stool in the center of your square, which stands, by the way, for four-square manhood, physically keen, mentally

alert, spiritually alive, and socially kind, and at the given signal, all of you bow, with knees stiff, and kiss this written oath, while your brothers join in the sacred chant."

"All together now," cried the Inquisitor, and the campers took up the chant:

"We are stuck up, we are stuck up,
We are stuck up behind,
We are stuck up, we are stuck up,
Because we are stuck up behind."

The last "behind" was the signal, and as the candidates reverently bowed to kiss the sacred oath, thereby tightly stretching their trousers over their "seats," a hundred open hands laid on one rousing slap.

"Oh, ouch! cried Foxie. "Ouch! ouch! Hold on, O Royal Inquisitor. That isn't fair. That's rotten! Henry has sand burrs in his hip pocket!" Foxie danced about, wildly dangling his injured hand.

The amazed candidates had come

to a standing position now, that is, as nearly as was possible, and all stood looking at Henry while the happy crowd went wild with the fun.

Slowly Henry reached his hand into his hip pocket to see what possibly could have hurt so much, and to his utter amazement pulled out his keys that he had hunted for high and low, and sheepishly held them up where all could see.

"Sand burrs!" he said dazedly, "and we just got through busting into my new trunk." The happy crowd roared again and then broke up for their evening's dip.

"I guess I won't forget that I'm a Stuck-Up anyway," he whispered, rubbing his trousers gently, "cause I'm branded. I can feel just where every single key goes. I was so excited about that turkey that I forgot to look in my hip pocket."

Ten moments later the beach was alive with a hundred naked savages,

laughing and talking and chanting the magic chant. Suddenly there was a splash, a chorus of yells, and every savage clambered out to dry.

As Henry went to his tent, he noted dozens of white nightshirts, and even pajamas, but nowhere in sight were there any pink ones. He considered just a second, and then decided to get into bed naked—no one would know the difference and he was sure he would be warm. He was just ready to crawl in when the night officer of the tent street, lantern in hand, came along, calling as he came, "Remember, you boys, everybody in a nightshirt tonight. It's going to be cool before morning."

Henry hesitated, then a bright idea struck him. If he *must* wear them, he'd loiter about till the lights were out, and then no one could see what color they were anyway. So he ambled out to dry himself and stood shivering in the half light.

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From up at the end of the tent street he heard the bugler blow taps. One by one the lights went out, and suddenly the camp quieted down, for it was indeed a serious offense for any camper to make a fuss after taps. Nights were to sleep, days to play, and woe be it to the boy who forgot and mixed the schedule! He slipped softly back to his bunk, fished out those glaring pink silk pajamas and pulled them on. Then carefully pulling back the covers, he slid his feet in. But hardly had he stretched himself out when his feet touched something cold and clammy. Before he knew it he had let out a blood-curdling yell that sounded as if some one were being slowly tortured to death. In one leap he was clear of the bunk, striking his head a terrific bump on the way out.

He heard Foxie snort as if his head were under the covers, and a half dozen others giggle, but he was too

terrified to consider just then. It was a snake, of that he was positive, and already his mind was full of wild pictures. He had heard of campers crawling into bed with huge reptiles that had poisoned them while they slept, and as he ran he began to wonder just where those little red viper pills were that his aunt had sent along for just such an emergency. Before he knew it, he stood trembling outside of the headquarters tent, sobbing "O, Mr. Whitehall! Mr. Whitehall! there's a reptile in my bed!"

In a second the Camp Chief was at the boy's side, questioning him and trying as best he could to quiet him.

"There must be some mistake, lad," he was saying kindly. "A snake couldn't get into your bed. It must have been some of your traps that got mixed up in your bedding. We'll go and see."

The entire camp was out of bed now, and electric flash-lights flashed everywhere. Of course a big group had gathered to see what the excitement was, and accompanied the Chief and nerve-racked Henry back to his tent. The Chief led the procession, and reaching Henry's disheveled bunk he flashed on his lantern and turned back the covers. A tremendous shout went up from the excited crowd, for there, tied with a stout string, sat a huge green frog, his smothered diaphragm working rapidly and his big eyes blinking uncertainly in the yellow light. From all appearances, he was much the more scared of the two.

"What kind of a snake is it?" murmured Henry, uncertainly, at which the boys went wild with delight.

The Chief laughingly tossed the frog out into the dark, and then looked at Henry, who, in spite of

his fright, was now laughing with the rest.

"O you pink pajamas!" cried Foxie. "I should think they would draw frogs!"

Henry's face suddenly fell and the laugh faded. He was caught again, and with them on. His chest was heaving a bit in spite of himself, and the Chief, being a real human weather prophet, predicted "early rain," and so hurried Henry off to the headquarters tent with him. Taps were blown the second time, but it would have taken a hypnotist to have put most boys to sleep then. There were too many things to talk about to go to sleep.

Mr. Whitehall had just gotten settled when he thought he heard a snuffle, and he knew the "rain" had come.

"That's all right, Henry," he said kindly. "Remember the oath. He who laughs last laughs best, and your

turn will come. There will be more recruits tomorrow, and perhaps another pair of pink pajamas, who can tell?"

"I know it," sobbed Henry. "But I told them not to put those pink silk pajamas in, but they insisted. Just imagine Foxie or Texas wearing pink pajamas in camp!"

The Chief laughed in spite of himself. "So that's it, is it? Well, forget it, boy. Foxie's are purple, with big pink tapes on them, and they are silk. They threw him in the lake the first night he wore them, and the color all came out on him. He was a sight. Now go to sleep."

"But, Mr. Whitehall," said Henry after a pause. "I've been thinking of that oath and I can't sleep here. I must go back to my own bunk and be a regular camper. I'm not afraid of snakes anyway. May I? Good night."

STORY III

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
GOES HUNTING RABBIT

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IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES GOES HUNTING RABBIT

Henry and Mr. Whitehall had just returned from a visit to the farm, where together they had made reparation for the dead turkey. Farmer Knevels, as the Chief had arranged it, had not been inclined, at first, to take the matter in a very good humor, and failed absolutely to see why a boy would not know better than to club a great turkey gobbler to death. But when he listened to Henry's own story of how he was sure they were wild birds, and saw for himself how repentant the lad was (for Henry had without hesitation offered every cent of his six dollars of spending money in payment for the dead bird) he mellowed considerably and finally accepted the

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five-dollar note, agreeing not to write Henry's father about the episode at all.

"And the turkey is, of course, yours, son," said the farmer. "I hope he'll have a real *wild* taste and that you will enjoy the treat. Just remember there is nothing wild in these parts, not even the skunks. They'll come right up and eat out of your hand."

Henry delivered the final word to Sambo to proceed with the cooking of the fowl, and told him how it had taken about all of his spending money.

"O, that's easy!" Sam said, with the gleam of a happy thought on his face. "We'll fixt that up, Mr. Henry. We'll just sell portions of that 'er bird at 'two bits' a plate as an extra at dinner, and we'll soon make that money back. What do you say?"

"Sambo, you are a genius!" cried

Henry, seeing a chance yet to make an impression with his turkey. "Will you honestly do it? I'll whack up with you. Say, I'll sell tickets, and every boy that hands in a ticket will get a slice of turkey." Henry hurried off with a big smile on his face to write up the "turkey tickets." Soon he was disposing of them among the campers, and word of the scheme did not reach Mr. Whitehall until every ticket had been sold and Henry was well in possession of the cash.

Mr. Whitehall then considered thoughtfully: Would it be fair to let Henry keep that money? Would it be fair to take it from him? He was sure neither one was just the proper thing, and was wondering what he had better do about it when the mail arrived. He opened his letters hastily and glanced through them to see what would need immediate attention. One little note held his attention. It was from a chap who

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had been to camp the preceding season and had had the time of his life, but because of the death of his father could not afford to return this year. His heart was with the bunch, though, and he had just written a little note of cheer to be read at the Camp Fire that evening at roll call.

Henry was summoned and the case laid squarely before him. In a trice he saw that he had no right to the money from the turkey after it was dressed and cooked in the camp kitchen, so he was eager to do whatever Mr. Whitehall would suggest about it.

“Well, Henry, you are a good sport, anyway, and we’ll make that turkey business a blessing to as fine a lad as ever was. We’ll start a Turkey Scholarship to Camp Pokokoko, and I’ll wire for Jim to come on to camp. It will pay his way for a week, and next year we’ll take

up a collection to keep it going. What do you say?"

"I like that fine," said Henry, thoughtfully, "all but one thing. I don't want Jim to know where the money came from. He'd feel better. Can't you fix that part?"

Mr. Whitehall assured him that he could and would at the Camp Fire that night.

Henry went away with a light heart to join Texas and Duke, who were just starting for the berry patch over the hill. They invited him to go along. He was glad to join them, and although he was simply bursting to tell them about the turkey tickets, he kept his peace all the day. They had gone through the woods and across the pasture lot, and were just coming out into a great new field that had been plowed for the first time. Here and there a great stump stood that had not yet been cleared away.

“What’s that?” cried Texas softly, pointing to something white that was crouching on a stump fifty yards away. Almost instantly the other boys saw it and instinctively stopped to parley.

“By crickey, it’s a jack rabbit!” said Henry excitedly. “I’ve seen pictures of them often, and I read not long ago how they inhabit old stumps. See, it moves—see? see its head?”

“Hum! Better get him, I suppose,” said Duke. “That turkey of yours won’t go around. Let’s all get some good ‘donnies’ and we’ll spread out in a skirmish line, and when I say ‘Fire!’ do it—see? But don’t fire till we see the white of his tail,” he added thoughtfully. “I don’t suppose he has any white in his eye, and anyway if he had we’re looking at him from the wrong end.”

The boys spread out ten feet apart, lay down on their appetite, and

slowly began to advance, eagerness in every move. This was far better than stalking wild turkeys, and besides they would not have to pay for the "pesky thing" this time. Turkey and rabbit all the same day! That would be going some.

Mr. Rabbit sat calmly, never suspecting a thing, while the three hunters worked their way nearer and nearer, selecting choice rocks as they came in reach of them.

"He's a whopper," whispered Texas. "I'll bet he's sound asleep in the sun. Hadn't we ought to yell before we fire? Don't seem like it's square not to give the critter a fighting chance."

"Let's do it," said Duke solemnly, "'cause we're bound to get him anyway."

They were within a dozen yards now, and were crouched in a little gully. Suddenly Texas rose and motioned them to fire. An avalanche of

chosen rocks was his answer, and, boy fashion, they went straight to their mark. What was their amazement to note that the rabbit didn't even leave the stump!

"We killed him right on the nest," cried Henry. "He never knew what hit him. I'll bet there was a surprise party in rabbit heaven!"

The three boys hastened forward to capture their prize. Texas was in the lead, and when the other two reached him he was convulsed with laughter, for the rabbit proved only to be two field stones that had been placed there, no doubt, by the farmer while plowing.

"Mum is the word," said Texas, when he got over his laugh. "We'd never hear the last of it if Foxie once got it."

They made their way to the berries and ate their fill, then returned to camp along the lake shore.

"I'm going fishing for bass," said

Texas. "I know where a whole family of them live. The old man's so big he's got whiskers on his chin. I'm going to make those minnows Doc brought home last night look like sardines from the South Sea Islands."

"What do you catch bass with?" questioned Henry. "I'd like to get one, too. Dad said I couldn't get one with a fine-toothed comb, and that the only bites I'd get would be from mosquitoes. Show me how, won't you?"

"O, it's easy," went on Duke. "You can use a weedless hook with a frog bait or pork rind, or if they won't rise to that, try a common artificial bait with gang hooks on it. Frogs are plentiful down by the swamp." (Henry shuddered, and made up his mind right there he'd have to fish with an artificial bait, because he would never go near that swamp again alone, cows or no cows.)

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Upon reaching camp, father's precious steel rod, that had caught everything from rainbow trout in the Gunnison to muskellunge in the Wisconsin lakes, was gotten out and jointed together. The wonderful little reel that purred like a kitten was attached, and after some time spent at the camp store a huge green-eyed Dowagiac minnow, equipped with at least five sets of sharp gangs, was purchased and put on the line.

Henry went down to the long pier and practiced casting until his patience was worn completely out. Texas, without as much as looking at what he was doing, could toss his weedless and frog as far out as the float and wind it in with the grace of a born fisherman; but try as Henry might, his would tangle and snarl, and soon his line and precious bait were hopelessly entangled about an obstreperous bulrush. He was nervous, anyway, at

the joshing that had been passed along about his casting.

"That must be a regular Muskie," cried Fox from the shade of a big tree where he was devouring the newly arrived sport sheet of the day before's paper.

Henry, in a moment of disgust, gave the pole a terrific yank, snapped off the line about twenty-five feet out and watched his new bait settle slowly into the green and weedy depths.

"You want to be sure to take a look at that hook first thing in the morning," called Foxie. "There will be a whole school of young whales on it. They are just crazy about new minnows."

It was time to swim in just a little, and then would come dinner, and then he would go off by himself into the little bay and try for a bass with a weedless, if he could just catch a few frogs for bait. He

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believed there were frogs to be had in other places than the big swamp, and after dinner he would find out.

So it was that as soon as the rest hour was over he got an old can, avoided the bunch for fear they might invite themselves to go along, and started north along the shore in search of frogs—"small ones that are active," Texas had told him in answer to his query.

After thirty moments of trailing through the brush and undergrowth he came to a wide sandy beach, and by the merest accident stumbled across a whole village of small hoppers that were at play along the water's edge. He gathered them eagerly. They were plentiful, and he would just catch a bunch for Texas and Duke while he was at it. In less than no time at all he had at least fifty; so many, in fact, that every time he opened the can to put another one in two would jump out.

Frogs! he had enough to last all summer, if he could just arrange to feed them and they didn't grow too fast so as to get so big they couldn't be lively.

He sat down to rest, and as he sat his eye caught sight of a long white egg lying in the sand. He picked it up and examined it carefully, then began to look about for the nest from which it must have fallen, saying aloud, as he gazed into the oaks overhead:

"Humph! Lucky that nest was over a sand beach, or they would have broken, sure!"

He thought it very odd that he could not find the nest, but found an explanation in another half dozen eggs that lay at his feet.

"What a chump I am," he said to himself. "These are some sort of water fowl's eggs, and they have nested here in the sand. Perhaps they are snipe eggs—they are about

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the right shape, for snipes, I've always been told, are so longlegged. I'll take a few back to Mr. Helmen and ask him. He'll know all about them."

After supper he washed his dishes quickly and then started toward the lake. Foxie saw him, and hurrying to him handed him his lost artificial bait, with the remark:

"Here, Henry, use this one. I have several more." Then he grinned.

"Why, it's the same one I lost," cried Henry.

"I know it," said Foxie kindly. "I got it when I was in swimming."

Henry thanked him and went on to his boat. He rowed straight for the bass grounds, and, attaching the big wooden minnow, began to troll as he had seen the other boys do. Three times he nearly had heart failure when his reel had purred and the line had spun out. Three times his wild hopes were dashed to pieces when he pulled in only a mat of

green drifting weeds. The last time, after getting the minnow finally cleared of weeds, he looked at it for some moments, then deliberately reached into his open tackle box and, taking a stout little pair of pincers, calmly removed all the gang hooks save the one on the tail, with the philosophical comment, "Those side hooks are no good anyway but to catch those blooming weeds. Now it's plain as day that if Mr. Fish *swallows* that bait those tail hooks will get him good and plenty." He fished and fished after that, but with no success whatever.

The sun was setting. The delicate evening tints were coloring the placid water. Far over in the cat-tails a big bull frog was already tuning up his croaker, and up at the Inlet a pair of "thunder pumpers" were sending messages to each other with the strangest Morse code Henry had ever heard.

He decided to try his frogs, so opened the can, and, although it was a decidedly distasteful task, he forced the hook through the cold jaws and adjusted the legs back over the second hook, then fastened them with a rubber band as Texas had shown him how to do.

Again he fished and fished, but luck was all against him. His zest for fishing was fast fading, when suddenly he felt a sluggish pull. He waited a second, then yanked in his line. He was positive he had a fish this time, from the way it acted, and he at once became excited. He didn't suppose a real whale could pull so hard. After careful maneuvering he at last pulled the finny monster out of the deep, and as quickly dropped him.

"Why, the blamed thing has whiskers!" he gasped. "It must be an old one, like the one Texas was telling of." Slowly he drew the

struggling fish toward him, and then sat and looked at it. Plainly the boy was disappointed.

"Humph! You're no bass!" he said at last contemptuously. "You're nothing but a devil fish. You look just like one anyway, and I wouldn't touch you for a hundred dollars." The catfish, for so it was, slowly relaxed its protruding horns and settled down in the bottom of the boat.

Henry peered into his tackle box, and, finding a second weedless hook, he cut the line off well away from the catfish, put on the new hook, adjusted another bait, and began again. In spite of himself he felt encouraged. He had not fished many minutes when suddenly his reel began to sing again and his line went out so fast that he could not hold on to the rapidly revolving crank. Twice it cracked him sharply on the knuckles, and he hastened to change

it to his other hand. It was during one of these compulsory changes that the rod slipped, and before he knew it, rod, reel, and all were overboard. He was too astonished to speak for a full moment, and then he muttered "darn!" with a vehemence that was unmistakable. Fear clutched his heart; his father's precious fishing-rod was gone; and yet the only satisfaction there was in it all was that it had gone with *something* on the other end of it.

"Oh, Jiminy, but he was a dandy!" he cried. "If I only hadn't lost him! Yet Dad always said that the biggest muskies usually get away." Slowly he picked up his oars, turned the boat in the direction of camp, and began to pull for the shore.

"What luck?" "Where is your fish?" "What did you get?" and similar remarks greeted him as he landed, but he was glum and said not a word. Foxie met him on the

pier, bait-box in hand, and questioned him sharply, but even he could get no satisfaction. He went straight to the nature man, with his half dozen eggs, and inquired what sort of birds they would belong to. Mr. Helmen promptly let out such an entirely unusual guffaw for his quiet dignity that a group quickly gathered to see what could have occasioned such merriment.

"Why, boy, those aren't birds' eggs at all. They are snake eggs!"

"Snake eggs!" breathed Henry incredulously. "O yes, I know, viper eggs," and he took a hasty departure, his cheeks flaming.

He met Texas coming in from a fishing expedition and noted with a pang of jealousy the two splendid bass he carried on his stringer.

"What luck, old sport?" he called cheerily to Henry.

"None," said Henry sadly, "and besides I had bad luck. I had a

splendid strike, but dropped my pole and it's gone. I've got a dandy can of frogs for you, though."

"Great! Where are they?" said Texas enthusiastically. "Fishing never was better than it is tonight. I just came in 'cause I had no more bait. Run get them quick, and I'll take you out with me. We'll get two more nice ones yet before dark. Aren't those dandies?" and he held up his catch proudly for inspection.

They were well started when Texas took the can, carefully removed the lid to get a frog, and then his face was filled with consternation. He looked at Henry incredulously, then back into the can. A smile broke through, and then he laughed long and loud.

"Henry, Henry," he cried in glee. "You are sure a greenhorn all right! These aren't frogs at all, boy. They are just common young hop-toads."

Henry's face fell and his lip quiv-

ered in spite of himself. He was strongly tempted to say, "Well, I know it," when Texas interrupted him with a gentler word.

"There now, don't go and get hot. I didn't go to upset you. Of course you didn't know. How could you when you come from a city? O, I'm sorry for you, but I'll bet you'll learn a few things out here. Frogs and toads look enough alike to be brothers, but say, bass don't like toads at all."

Slowly they returned to camp and Texas slipped off to tell the joke. He made every fellow promise not to tell, but he just couldn't keep it, for every second he kept it to himself it got funnier and funnier, until he simply exploded.

Foxie offered to go first thing in the morning to help look for the rod, comforting Henry by telling him that a bass, if bass it was, would never get that pole and line out of

the weeds and they would find it. Fox was the champion diver of the camp, had already rescued a half dozen lost rods, and was sure he could find Henry's.

"Now mind, we'll go early," said Foxie last thing that night, "and in case we find it I'm going to try my hand at fishing with toads—ha! ha! The idea appeals to me!"

STORY IV

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
BECOMES A REAL FISHERMAN

STORY IV

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES BE- COMES A REAL FISHERMAN

"Hi there! Wake up!" whispered Foxie as he violently shook the sleeping form of Henry. "That bass will be going out to dinner and taking your father's pole along as a curio if we don't get a hustle on us."

Henry rose, dressed hastily, and soon the two boys were off in a boat to the bass grounds. Henry was just a little doubtful about the exact spot, but after a little scouting believed he located just where his boat had sat the evening before.

"You ought to have marked it, Henry," said Foxie. "It would have been so easy to have cut a notch on the gunwale of your boat." He looked at Henry out of the corner

of his eye to see if he would swallow it.

Henry meditated a full moment before he answered, and then he said, as he carefully peered into the water in search of the pole, "If we find that pole and it has a bass on it we'll mark this one."

Foxie was having the time of his life to keep from fairly exploding, and no doubt he would have blown up if he had not just at that moment caught sight of a fishline tangled about a half dozen big bulrushes.

"Was your line green?" he called.

"Yes, awfully green," answered Henry, "why?"

"You row as I tell you," said Foxie, "and we'll see. There—easy on the left oar!"

In a few moments Foxie was slowly pulling in yards of green line and at the same time carefully watching the water. All he wanted was

to locate the rod, and he must be careful not to yank the line out of the reel and thereby lose all chances. It had been a warm night, and the sun was already flooding the placid water with warm rays, so that the water was delightful. Foxie sat on the bow of the boat with his feet hanging over.

"Now I think it is right down here," he said to Henry, "but as I have no way of telling what sort of a bottom it is, I'm going to hang on to the edge of the boat and fish around with my posterior extremities a bit. I've done it so much that they are almost prehensile."

Henry looked at Foxie with great admiration. He hadn't the least idea in the world what he meant, but if he said so, that settled it.

Foxie was in the water now, and to Henry's glee, in less time than it takes to tell of it, had gotten hold of the pole and pulled it in.

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"Hurray for you, old man!" cried Henry.

"Now for the bass," said Foxie, not a little proud of his success. He began winding up the loose line, when suddenly he felt it tighten; then he knew the catch had not gotten away.

"We have him, old boy," he said cheerily. "Now keep your eyes open."

Slowly the line came in, but without much opposition, and suddenly the catch hove into sight.

Foxie was disgusted beyond measure.

"Bass!" he said. "Why it's nothing but a big old leather-back turtle."

Henry's hopes were again crushed, but he was interested in the big struggling turtle.

"What shall we do with it, Foxie?"

"O, it will make soup. Let's save him," said Foxie. "And there's the

breakfast bugle now. We are late for flag-raising, and we'll catch it."

Both boys pulled hard for the little dock.

Mr. Whitehall was called from his breakfast to the nearby farm to answer a long distance telephone call, and shortly afterward a special messenger from the little city of Corey drove into camp with a telegram. The messenger was anxious to be off, and thought probably there would be an answer necessary, so Mr. Helmen concluded to open it and see what it could be, for a message like that was very unusual.

He read the yellow sheet twice, and then laughed aloud as he started for pencil and paper to write a reply, for reply there must be.

"Mrs. Ruggles," he wrote, "have no fears. Your son is safe in camp and well. Will write at once," and signed Mr. Whitehall's name.

"What has happened to my son

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Henry?" the telegram read. "Have had no word from him in three days. Wire an anxious and worried mother."

"It would take some telegram to tell her all that's happened to the kid," he remarked to one of the Leaders. Mr. Whitehall came in just then with a smile on his face, too, and seeing the men he laughed outright.

"Long distance from Henry's mother," he said. "She had tears in her voice, and urged me to tell her the truth if anything had gone wrong. The kid in a passion of filial love promised her he would write morning and evening. I'll wager my hat he hasn't even mailed a postal in three days."

He went to the window and called Henry from his breakfast.

"Say, boy, when did you write home?" he said kindly, as his eyes ran over the telegram.

"Why, I wrote day before yesterday a big letter," he said.

"Are you sure? I was just talking to your mother and she says she hasn't had even a postal from you yet, and she is worried sick for fear a poison snake or something has killed you. I had to assure her positively three times that you were not sick in bed and that your hands and legs were all whole. You wrote a big letter, you say? Strange——"

"Yes, Mr. Whitehall," said Henry, his face coloring scarlet, "but I just now remembered I—I—forgot to mail it. It's in my trunk."

"You be sure to get a big fat one in this morning's mail," laughed Mr. Whitehall, "or your Dad will be dropping in on you in an airship to see if you are really alive."

All day long Henry trailed around behind Duke and Lefty, helping them some, but just watching them mostly, as they worked on their tests for their Efficiency Pen-nant. It took him some time to

catch on to the idea, but when once he did he became tremendously enthusiastic over it. Yet it did not occur to him that *he*, too, by persistent effort, might win an efficiency honor.

The Camp Fire that evening was given over to the awarding of the pennants. Boy after boy was called to the front, and after a little speech was awarded his Honor Pennant. Henry felt a strong yearning in his heart. If he could but get an Honor Pennant he was sure they would no longer look at him as a green city chap. He was aroused from his thoughts by nine rousing cheers for Texas and Foxie.

"They are, they are, they are all right!" and he joined in with all his strength.

"The Camp is proud to award these pennants. It is a great thing for a boy to achieve for himself, and to attempt and do things he has always

thought he could not do. It's a greater thing for a boy, nowadays, to be familiar with the names of the common birds, trees, and flowers, and to be able to identify and tell something of interest about the different wild animals of field and stream. It enlarges a boy's interest tremendously, and opens up whole avenues of new and interesting experiences. If you want to be always young and be a boy, keep in close touch with Nature and her myriad of wild folks.

"There are some things a city chap knows, but there are a few others that he is not familiar with. I have him sized up about like this: He knows all the latest movie stars by name and salary, and is well versed in every line of latest ragtime music. He can name the brands of all the popular cigarettes, and tell you who has the greatest batting average in all the pinhead leagues.

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He knows who holds the feather-weight championships, who coached the Pumpkin Center Aggregation last season, and what the latest sensation at the vaudeville is; but to save his soul he can't tell a red oak from a weeping willow, or a poison sumac from a sweetbrier. All the birds in creation are either English sparrows or crows, all toads are bullfrogs, and every little cricket is a potato-bug. He handles an ax as if he were paring corns, and he would starve to death in a grocery store if he had to prepare his own meals.

"He never saw a cock cardinal or a jenny wren's nest. He often mistakes June bugs for doodle bugs, and every insect that smells a bit obnoxious is either a granddaddy long-legs or a stinkbug. A brown thrasher is a shitepoke, and a kingfisher is a hoot owl or an especially large humming-bird. Tame domestic turkeys, calmly seated on rail fences, are wild

birds that should be exterminated without delay, and a plaintive note of a tree toad is a turtle-dove calling its mate. In short, the average—I say *average*, because now and then you do find a boy who has really heard the call of the wild and answered it in so far as his circumstances will permit—the average boy is woefully ignorant of the whole outdoors with its myriad of interests, that far surpass the superficial, ‘gaiety notes’ of city life.

“It has taken millions of population and generations of time to develop a few such men as John Burroughs, Izaak Walton, Henry Thoreau, Luther Burbank, Enos Mills, John Muir and others. Still, by common consent we acknowledge that these men, because of their vast knowledge of nature and wood lore, have found the real fountain of youth, the one inexhaustible supply of pure unadulterated joy.

“There is one thing certain, however—when a fellow has won his Efficiency Pennant he is no longer a tenderfoot, but a real outdoors man. And I’m hoping every chap about this fire tonight will make an honest effort to take an Honor Pennant home.”

Henry’s mind was made up. He would get one of those pennants at no matter what cost, and he knew that Foxie would help him. He was perfectly conscious that he had not proven very adept at identifying animals, but he believed he had learned some things and he would learn more.

That very evening he had occasion to go down to the locker house just before turning in for the night to get his sweater, and just as he was leaving he thought he saw something crouching in the corner. It was fur, he was sure of that; and at once went in search of a stick to

poke it up a bit, so he could see it better. But, finding none, he returned to the tent, borrowed Texas' electric flash and came back to investigate, for perhaps it would count as one of the five animals he must find and identify.

In two minutes he was back again, and in answer to Texas' question he replied very disgustedly:

"O, it was nothing but a cat."

"A cat?" said Texas. "You're dreaming! I've been here two seasons now and I never saw a cat on the camp grounds. I'll bet a doughnut it was a woodchuck or a big squirrel. What would a cat be doing around here?"

An argument followed, and finally Mr. Helmen was induced to go along to pass final judgment. There were a dozen pajama-clad boys equipped with flash lights who started with the nature man. When within a few yards of the building they were

all quieted down, so as not to "scare the beast away."

Mr. Helmen was in the lead by a distance of ten feet, and cautiously flashed his light in the corner Henry directed. One look was enough. He instantly turned and ran as fast as his long legs would carry him, waving the crowd to follow. The astonished boys drew up at the pump and demanded an explanation from the laugh-choked Helmen.

"What in thunder was it?" drawled Texas. "All I saw was a long white stripe down its back."

"Skunk," laughed Mr. Helmen tumultuously. "An honest-to-goodness skunk, eating a freshly killed chicken." Then turning to Henry he added, between gasps, "Henry, we'd have had to bury you alive if you had petted that kittie, and then what could we have told your mother!"

The giggles were contagious, and

soon the entire camp was gathered about, talking of Henry's new discovery.

"That counts for one of my five animals anyway," declared the camper.

"But a skunk isn't a cat," objected Lefty.

"O, yes, it is, too," declared Mr. Helmen. "It's a polecat, and it ought to count."

After Devotions the next morning Henry started for the woods to see what he could find. He was sure to find his twenty-five flowers, but he was not so sure about the balance of his animals.

Noon found him still wandering here and there in the timber at the edge of the old Spatter-dock Swamp, vainly in search of his twenty-fifth wild flower. He had not fared so well with the animals, for a lonely tree toad and a grey squirrel were all that had crossed his path. But

he had discovered flowers galore, and he was happy in his success. He had sat down on an old moss-grown stump to count them before starting back, and found he had but twenty-four. He just must find one more.

“Perhaps there would be something new over in that sumac thicket,” he said, as he rose and started toward it. It was thick and close, and many young grape vines had woven their way in and out until it was an immense open meshwork of leaves and twigs and tendrils interwoven in wild confusion. He was about to turn back when he caught sight of a beautiful stalk of wild larkspur, and he struggled on, determined to pluck it.

He was looking about to find the best way out of the tangle, his heart glad, for he had succeeded with the flowers, when he saw just ahead of him the oddest blossom he had ever seen. It was so large that it at-

tracted his attention, and its pearl-grey color and odd conical shape looked so interesting he decided that, although he didn't need it, he would carry it back to camp, for he was sure no one else had found one like it. With difficulty he worked his way to it, and at once saw its stem was too heavy to pull, so taking out his knife he crouched ready to cut it.

What happened next he was unable to tell exactly. All he knew was that in the twinkling of an eye, in less than one-tenth of a second, his poor entangled head became the focus for a dozen irate wasps; for Henry Ruggles, in his eager search for botanical specimens, had crudely picked an enormous paper wasps' nest. Fortunately for the lad, it was in the heat of a summer's day and the bulk of the population were out of the nest flying in the timber. Henry screamed for help, while his arms went wildly about like the wings

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of a great Dutch windmill. He forgot his flowers, and thought only of his fast swelling countenance. His nose was on fire, and already one eye was so swollen he could scarcely see.

Just how he ever extricated himself from that tangle of vines and low-hanging shrubs he could not tell, but after a desperate struggle he found himself free, with the villains still pursuing. Fortunately, he had retained his hat, and once in the clearing he gave desperate battle.

The sun never shone on a sorrier sight than Henry Ruggles as he trudged off to camp, one cheek and his chin twice their normal size, and three huge welts on his head and neck, to say nothing of the one just under his left eye. He was crying, of course. Who wouldn't be, that was at all human? But, if the truth could only be known, the thing that hurt far worse than the smarting

wasp-stings was the knowledge that once more his ignorance had gotten him into trouble that was painful.

He took pains not to explain fully just how he had come by his wounds, and simply stated that while coming through the brush he had knocked down a big wasps' nest and they had gotten him when he fell. There was some comfort in the fact that the boys made a hero of him, and that he was put to bed and had a lovely dinner served to him in the hospital tent.

He used his forced confinement to write a big letter to his father, and among other interesting facts he told him that he was working hard to get an Efficiency Pennant; and as he came to the close he could not restrain himself from adding, "And, Daddy, believe me, I am having some adventures. I don't know what I'd do if it wasn't for Texas. He's saved my life a half dozen

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times, and I've learned that a wasp is a bug with an ice pick on the end of its tail."

Mr. Ruggles read that paragraph over and over, and then with a scowl on his usually happy face he tore the letter into bits and tossed it into the waste basket, with the remark, "I don't know what the kid can possibly mean, but I guess his aunt had better not read that one. We'd have to start off to that camp yet tonight."

STORY V

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
PROVES HIS NERVE

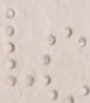
STORY V

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES PROVES HIS NERVE

"The rope is out of the flag pole, Sir," said the bugler who was responsible for getting the flag on to the halyards each morning ready for the raising.

"Out of the pulley?" said the Chief in surprise. "I knew that the wind blew a gale all night, but I didn't think it was that bad. Well, the old pole will have to come down to be restrung, that's all. We'll dispense with the flag raising this morning."

Henry had overheard the conversation and was now busy sizing up the pole. There was *one* thing he could do, and that was climb. Suddenly it dawned upon him that perhaps this was his chance. The



way he had borne up under the fierce attack by the wasps had made him friends, and he was anxious to follow it up and take advantage of his opportunity.

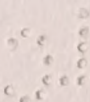
"I can climb it easy, Mr. Whitehall. Will you let me try?" he said eagerly.

Mr. Whitehall considered. "But if you should fall, boy, what then? It's pretty slender at top. O yes, it would hold you. It's seasoned hickory. I'm not afraid of that, but it's the chance of falling——"

"O, I won't fall," urged Henry. "If I find it too hard I'll come down."

"Well, if you'd like to try," said the Chief half reluctantly. "we'll let you. The pole is set in cement and it would be a big job to dig it up. I'll tell you—we'll get the canvas we use for blanket tossing, pick out a reliable crew to man it, and then, if you should fall, we'll catch you."

Every camper was instantly alert



and anxious to get on the "reliable crew." Henry stripped off his blouse and put on a pair of tennis slippers. The end of the rope was fastened loosely through his belt and he was ready. His face was solemn and his teeth set. He simply must make good. Every last boy in camp was watching him, and if he failed—well, he wasn't going to, that was all there was to it.

The big canvas was stretched tight, and under the Chief's command the strongest boys stood ready to move instantly to the spot of danger. Henry started amid a lot of loud talk and many suggestions yet he heard them not. His crisis had come, and his whole attention was being given to the pole. He climbed easily the first thirty feet and then stopped to rest. Already the pole was beginning to sway with his weight, but he was determined.

He started again, coolly and de-

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liberately, keeping his eye on the gently rattling pulley all the while. It was his goal. In a moment or two he was past the big knot. Just the slender skinned tip was above him now. Once he looked down on the sea of upturned faces. The laughter was gone. They were all eager and interested, and some a bit anxious, for the pole was swaying considerably.

He heard the Chief talking to him, and urging him to go slowly, to take all the time he needed, and above all not to get excited. But he *was* excited; he couldn't help it. He was sweating profusely and he could feel his heart pounding violently. In spite of himself his legs would quiver as he wound them about the slender pole.

Two more feet and by a stretch he could reach the pulley. It took a tremendous effort, yet before he realized it he was there. He reached

eagerly for the rope, while he held on firmly with one hand. The free hand trembled so violently that he feared he would drop the rope.

He was reaching now, O so eagerly—yes, the end was through the pulley. A great shout went up from the crowd below, and then Henry did a foolish thing. He had not estimated the weight of the rope hanging along the pole, and instead of feeding it through slowly until it would, in a measure, balance itself, he reached to catch the inserted end, expecting to pull the balance through; but lo, his foot slipped—just a trifle to be sure, yet enough to frighten him, and he grabbed frantically for the pole.

It all happened in a second. Like a flash of lightning the short end of the rope ran out of the pulley and Henry found himself clinging to the top of the pole empty-handed. His boy's heart sank within him. He

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had failed, for there was no way under heaven for them to get the rope back to him. He hesitated just a moment, and then began to let himself down.

They were shouting something about "Hard luck, old boy!" and "Dirty shame!" but it was all one shout of defeat to him.

The Chief was very kind, though, and insisted that he had made a good try and *was* a real sport. He took him over to a big chair in the shade and made him rest. It was while he was resting that Foxie saved the day.

"We're a bunch of boobs!" he cried. "Nobody could make a go of such a stunt! We'll get that rope up there yet, old boy, see if we don't. When you get good and rested, if you think you have pep enough to try again, we'll show them.

"What we ought to have done was to coil that rope in a neat coil and

then hang it on your arm where it would be out of the way, and give you the heavy tapped end to thread with; then there wouldn't be any weight on the short end and you could take it in your hand and bring it down the pole with you."

"That sounds logical," said Texas. "Let's get her ready."

In a few moments Henry was at it again. He went slower this time, for he realized better just what was before him. He reached the big knot a second time and took a good rest, then went on to the top in spite of the breeze that had risen and in spite of the aching legs.

Cautiously he shoved the tapped end through. It hung nicely. He braced himself to catch the end. Ah! he had it in his hand. He had won, and a cheer went up from below that brought a smile to his sweating face. He held the end tightly to the pole, while he used

his other hand to lift the coil from his arm, just as the Chief had cautioned him to do. It was off, and he was just fixing to descend, when suddenly his head began to whirl and his legs went weak.

"Oh, I'm falling!" he cried, and in that instant he fell into space.

The Chief's face had never left the figure on the pole. In the twinkling of an eye he had, in a stern voice that could not be disobeyed, ordered the crew to "be ready."

Foxie saw the situation and saved the day, for every lad was dazed and wits don't always work fast at such times, especially when you see some one else dashing to destruction.

"All together!" he cried, tightening his grip on the canvas. It was the usual signal with the canvas, and the crew obeyed instantly.

Henry struck the canvas like a

rock from a housetop. More than half of the boys lost their hold on the edge, yet the fall was broken, and an instant later Henry Ruggles lay on the ground, the canvas under him, and his face as ashen as the sheet. Suddenly a tremendous shout went up from the group, for Henry held tight in his hand the tapped end of the rope. The halyard was up again! A dash of cold water brought the lad back to life, and in another second he was the hero of Camp Pokokoko.

"I told you we'd do it!" cried Foxie, swelling all up. "It's easy when you know how. Gentlemen, let me introduce you to the human monkey. He scales the clouds like a——"

"We killed a bear!" shouted Texas in disgust.

"Let's raise the flag," shouted Lefty, "to celebrate." And as Old Glory caught the breeze the usual

salute was forgotten and nine rousing cheers for Henry took its place.

Henry's eyes sparkled and a chuckle escaped his lips as he thought what Auntie would have done if she had seen him fall. But it was all worth while. He was a real camper now, for he had achieved, and he was happy.

"Let's have turtle for dinner," said Duke. "I'm getting ashamed to look a baked bean in the face."

"It's a go," shouted Texas. "Foxie has the lines and the necessary large hooks. Let's get at it."

A stout line was strung from Bass Point to a whitened pole that stuck up fifty yards out in the narrows. Each hook was baited with a dead fish, and the campers returned to shore to put in the morning at something else. They cruised the lake in the big war canoe, racing every little motor boat they could find. They investigated twenty birds' nests that

were scattered from the marsh to the orchard. They sampled at least a dozen varieties of green apples, and finally wound up at Dewberry hill where they ate great ripe berries until they could stand no more.

"O have a few more," urged Texas.

"Can't! My appetite is completely berried now," said Foxie.

"O bum joke," cried a half dozen, "into the lake with him!"

In a trice Foxie was grabbed bodily and borne down to the shore, two fellows holding at each leg and arm. Foxie was laughing so hard he could not offer resistance.

"One, two, three!" shouted Texas joyously, and Foxie was tossed unceremoniously into the water.

"'Bout time to go look at that set line," drawled Texas. "I'll bet we have at least a half dozen."

"Keep your eye peeled for pussie cats," warned Lefty, as they wound

their way down through the dense second growth.

"Gracious! take a look at that patch of skunk cabbage," said Foxie. "I wonder what good *it* is."

"Why, the pole-cats make sauer kraut of it," said Texas, and then he ran, for he realized full well that it was his turn for a mauling this time.

Just as the gang were emerging from the woods some one turned up a big box turtle, which of course occasioned another pow-wow. They tried every way they could imagine with the implements at hand to force the box and get a look at the animal inside, but absolutely failed.

"How old is it, do you suppose?" asked Lefty, who was much interested in the hard armor plate.

"We can't tell till we find his tail," said Foxie. "They have a spine on their tail for each year, just as a rattler has a rattle. But we'll soon find out."

Foxie set about cutting a pry out of a hickory sapling, and soon he was ready to begin to force the turtle to give up its age.

"Which end shall I operate on?" he questioned.

"This end is the one."

"No, this one."

"No, no; you're crazy! This one."

"Let's toss and see which is heads and which is tails," laughed Texas, and so they did.

Foxie held the box turtle firmly between his knees and began to pry at the end determined upon, but had very little success. Suddenly the horny trap door was released and a small serpentine head on a long telescoped neck darted out at his fingers like an old setting hen. He was so surprised he dropped pry and all and tumbled over backward.

"Samanthie's pet cat!" he groaned.

“Did you see that mouth? That old boy has a Jack-in-the-box beaten a mile.”

When they picked the turtle up again the trap door was of course drawn tight, and it was again a mooted question as to just which door the old rascal had really opened, the front or the back.

“Let’s cut our initials on its back,” suggested Lefty. “I’ve heard of such things being done and people finding them a hundred years later.”

So, suiting the action to the word, the sculpturing was begun. It was found to be no easy job, but after nearly an hour’s scratching the turtle was released, carrying seven hand-engraved calling cards on its back and a “Camp Pokokoko” prominently carved on what might properly be termed the wishbone.

Just before noon they reached camp, and with much ceremony pulled in their set line. There proved

to be three large turtles on it—two huge leather-backs and one old snapper that had a generous growth of moss on his back. The two leather-backs were taken to camp and the trout line set a second time.

“Henry wants to dress them,” said Foxie, with a sly wink at the others, “so he’ll know just how to do it next time.”

Henry consented good-naturedly to be the butcher, and was dispatched to the fish table back of the Lodge to behead the turtles so they could bleed, and Foxie said that after dinner he would give him lessons in how to skin and prepare them ready for frying. Henry went proudly to the fish table, a turtle in each hand, deposited them in a tub, and went to the kitchen to get a cleaver. He soon returned, but both turtles had drawn head and tail up into their shells, and the novice was in a quandary just how to get them to

stick out their heads so they could be slaughtered.

Finally a bright idea came, and picking them up one at a time by a sharp flipper he hung them, as he supposed, head downward. Slowly there was a protuberance and it was quickly chopped off with a vengeance.

He tossed the butchered "sea fowl" on the grass and hastened in to dinner, satisfied with his job.

Foxie finished first and hurried out to get started on the skinning process. To his surprise, both turtles were gone. He hastily summoned Henry to account for the beasts, but the boy had no excuses. He had cut off both heads, and now they were gone.

After a careful search one and then the other was discovered some hundred yards away in the tall thick weeds headed straight for the water.

Foxie found the first one, and when once he saw it he set up such a to-do that all the crowd hurried to see

what he had discovered. He held up the struggling animal, and promptly out darted the long neck and head in anger.

"Suffering cat-fish!" ejaculated Foxie in disgust. "You are a great camper!" and then he burst into a flood of merriment.

"O Henry, you cut off their *tails* instead of their heads."

The campers yelled with delight, while Foxie took the leather-backs back to the table and re-operated. Henry watched the process very carefully until it was completed and the pieces of white meat were washed and delivered to Sambo.

The gang were descending the hill together to arrange their beds and get their tent in shape for noon inspection when Henry startled them with some news.

"Say, you Royal Stuck-Ups, listen to me! I've got the greatest scheme you ever heard of. I've been creating

fun for this bunch long enough. Now let's play the next act. What do you say?"

"What's the idea?" questioned Texas.

"Well, you know that Olsen that arrived yesterday?"

They all nodded.

"Well, he's greener than I ever was. Let's do a stunt. It won't hurt him a bit, and it will make that Stuck-Up game look like a plain game of checkers. Will you do it?"

A long secret conference followed, at which Olsen was the main topic.

"Henry, you're a wonder," cried Foxie thirty minutes later. "That will be the best stunt yet. Saturday night is the night. I'll get the cat; you leave it to me."

STORY VI

IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES
CONDUCTS A COON HUNT

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IN WHICH HENRY RUGGLES CONDUCTS A COON HUNT

“Mother’s coming Visitors’ Day,” said Henry after finishing his sixteen-page letter. “Believe me, I’ll bet she will be glad to see *me*, too. Why, she’s never been away from *me* two weeks before in her life.”

“I’m glad she’s coming,” commented Foxie. “Mine isn’t and perhaps yours will bring enough eats for the whole tent. I’d give my old Ingersoll for one bite of homemade chocolate cake—the kind that smears all over your face and you can taste for an hour. My mother knows just how to make it, I tell you that!”

“Say,” said Henry thoughtfully, “my mother certainly will be surprised to see how the camp works. She had the queerest notions about

boys' camps you ever heard of, and the morning I started I know blessed well that she thought she'd never see me again. Isn't it funny the notions mothers get about things? She won't let me play ball on the corner lot 'cause there are always a few loud mouths, and when I suggested I'd like to enter the All City Field-meet she was afraid my heart wasn't strong enough for such 'violent exertion,' I think she called it. She just wants me to read books and go to Sunday school, and dress up. I've thought of running away several times, but Dad, he knows better about things, and he got it fixed up. I never would have gotten to come to old Pokokoko if it hadn't been for him. Gee! but I'll be proud to show little 'Momsey' this tan. Isn't it a beaut? And believe me, I'm going to dive off the high board just to show her, and go into every race they have all day."

“Say, Henry, there is one thing you haven’t thought of before, but it *might* happen. I’ve seen it happen several times, and it came near happening to me my first season here. My mother was so glad to see *me* she wanted me to go home with her. She said she thought I had played savage long enough now, and she found my clothes a little soiled and she thought every stitch of them ought to go to the laundry. Dad saved my life and said ‘No.’ Gee! but I was glad, for I won the aquatic medal by staying, and met some of the best Leaders that old Poko has ever had. But what I was really thinking of was this—if she should want you to go it would spoil that coon hunt.”

Henry thought for a moment. “I simply can’t go, that’s all. I hadn’t even thought of it that way. But say, if she should *insist*! My gracious, Foxie, we have just got to

have that. That'll be more fun than a balloon ascension. Say, let's do it tonight. I can get my part ready. I talked to Mr. Knevels and he said I could have the old tomcat if I'd take care of him."

"It's a go. Let's do her tonight. It's going to be full moon, you know, and we can see where to go so much better. Think he'll bite, do you?"

"Bite! Why, boy, Happy Olsen would bite at anything, and when he gets excited he stutters like a threshing machine. Yesterday they sent him away down to the farm to help Mr. Knevels unload post-holes and told him to bring back the milk pump with him. He came back in a little while and said Mr. Knevels had them all 'planted' and that the milk pump wasn't there. Now what do you think of that? I never was that green."

"You know they had that other new chap watering that potato field

with a bucket. He never did catch on. But say, after all, Happy is a dandy chap. He just gets one bite out of his candy, and he'll lend you anything he has; and snore—my gracious! Sounds like the exhaust on a freight engine.”

“Did you hear Parkie talking in his sleep last night?”

“No. What did he say?”

“I never laughed so hard in my life. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. He was having an argument over who was the best all-round quarterback in the country, and he sure had things mixed up.”

The bugle for supper sounded from the hill, and the two pals made a dive for their tent to get on a shirt.

“Remember then, right after the Camp Fire,” called Foxie.

“I'll be on deck with bells on,” called Henry. “Be sure you get the dull ax.”

The camp fire had died low. The

entire list of songs had been sung with a vengeance. Mr. Helmen had finished his little talk on birds. Far over at the Kizer Inlet the great harvest moon was just coming out of the water and casting its shimmering ribbon of gold across the ripples. From somewhere came the melody of a quartet of happy songsters. Quiet had settled down on the boys. They were spellbound and just content to sit and dream.

"This is the kind of night they hunt coons on the Gulf of Mexico," said Texas in his friendly drawl.

"Tell us about a coon hunt, Texas," urged Foxie, while Henry excused himself and disappeared in the darkness.

"I should think there would be some around here," said Texas, in no hurry whatever to begin his story.

"Their hides are beautiful, aren't they?" queried Foxie.

"Great!" answered Texas with en-

thusiasm, "and it's real excitement to tree one and bag it. It's lots more fun than shooting him, and you get him alive. They make great pets in a little while. I've thought several times I saw signs of them over by that old swamp. Wish we had a hound, we'd investigate."

"Tell us a coon hunt story, Texas," begged Happy Olsen.

"I'd rather take you on a real hunt than tell you about one," quickly answered Texas. (That was just the opening he had been pushing for.)

"Why, Mr. Knevels has a hound," volunteered some one. "I'm sure he would let us borrow him for an evening."

"Say it—it—it would be gr—great if we had a pet coo—co—coon," cried Happy, dancing about. "We would ca-ca—call him King Po-po-po—kokoko, and he'd be our mascot."

Everybody was in a fever of

excitement at once. Anything in the way of an adventure was always acceptable; whether it was to hunt coon or trap elephants, it made little difference.

"Let's get the dog," shouted Lefty, "—it won't take but a few moments to get him—and make a try. I was over by the swamp after supper looking for blackberries and I saw the funniest mound of fresh earth. I was going to investigate, but just then the assembly called for the Camp Fire. There is some animal over there, that's sure; and it isn't a skunk either."

"That settles it," cried Mr. Helmen. "I'm in for a coon hunt or any other kind of a hunt this glorious night. Such nights come but once a year. It's a right down shame to go to bed. Chief, what do you say—can we have a little frolic?"

"I'm for it," said the Chief good-humoredly. "I'm not just exactly

sure we are in the coon belt, but perhaps we can find a bull moose." Everybody roared, for Henry had written home about his moose experience, and then forgotten and left the letter on the table and every boy in camp had read it.

"Now just how do you do it, Texas?" he asked, as the noise subsided.

"Well," said Texas, with furtive glances at Foxie for his cue. (Foxie was trying to tell him what to do by a series of strange grimaces, but Texas was unable to understand. He realized, however, that he must keep them from starting too soon, so as to give Henry time to get fixed.)

"Well, it's like this," said Texas at length. "They usually have a pack of dogs, and we can get only one. Now the only thing that keeps a coon treed until you can get to him is to surround the tree with

dogs that will keep up the yapping. So what we had better do is all to practice yapping awhile, so we can act as dogs. It would be a shame to tree a coon and then lose him."

The idea pleased the crowd immensely. In thirty seconds every known species of dog on earth was being ably represented about the fire. It was great fun, and lasted several minutes.

"Now we have no gun, so we must bag our game," continued Texas. "It's just about as easy, anyway. You turn the dogs loose to scour the woods first, and if they find a fresh scent they will set up a great to-do. You hurry to the tree, and then if you have a coon you will be able to see his eyes shining in the dark. You carefully cut the tree, and then rush in with a grain sack and bag the coon. He's of course so scared by the hullabaloo that it never occurs to

him to run. Then you tie the bag to a long pole and take him home.

"Foxye, you get the dog, Lefty, you get a big grain sack, and we'll scare up the lanterns. O yes, and an ax and a bit of rope."

The boys were off, and everybody that had no special thing to do just stood around in groups and speculated.

"Happy is some rail splitter!" cried some one.

"You ju—ju—just bet I am," cried Happy. "I wa—want to cho—chop that tree!"

In twenty minutes the boys were back with the dog, a huge grain sack, and the lanterns. Mr. Helmen suggested a shovel to investigate the mound of fresh dirt. They were off, with Happy well in the lead, and a more excited boy you never saw. In half an hour they were bordering the swamp, and before long the hound began to show unmistakable

signs of uneasiness. Then followed a long yap.

"He sme—smells something," cried Happy. "Let him g—go!"

"Not in this swamp," cried Texas. "We might lose him. Everybody yap now, and keep your eyes open."

They all broke into a run and followed the lead of the hound. Suddenly Henry and Edwin Knevels appeared and joined in the chase.

"She's straight ahead," whispered Henry to Texas. "Let the hound lead out."

After as exciting a scramble as a crowd of boys ever had in this world, the hound stopped short in a patch of hickory second-growth and set up such a yap that the boys began gazing into the treetops to see if by any good chance they could have scared up a coon.

"I see him! I see him!" cried Texas, after a lot of maneuvering and much yapping. Every boy was

dry and entirely out of breath. Everyone gazed in the direction indicated, and before many seconds the tree was surrounded. There could be no doubting it, there was something in the upper branches.

"It's a young one," cried Texas. "Now let go easy. Let's some of us get dry stuff and build a fire, and we'll let Happy chop down the tree. Mr. Helmen, you and Henry take the bag, and look out—it might be a polecat."

It was hard to rouse any interest in gathering wood for a fire, but when Texas refused to let the tree be cut until the fire was lighted, many hands made light work.

Soon the yellow glare outlined the animal in the tree, and Happy prepared with real pomp and ceremony to fell the hickory.

"Thi—thi—this ax is a—a—awful dull," he panted. "Ge—gee, it hasn't been sharpened for a coon's age!"

Oh, how he toiled, growing more excited each moment. The perspiration just rolled off. Henry never enjoyed anything so much in his life. It had worked out so much better than he even dared hope—thanks to the help of Mr. Knevels and Ed, and the big surprise was yet to come.

Finally the tree swayed and slowly toppled over. The boys crowded in tight, but Mr. Helmen was ready, and in a jiffy the bag was slid over the coon and the successful catch announced with a gleeful shout.

“It’s a young one!” cried Mr. Helmen. “Now let’s take a look at that mound of fresh dirt before we go. It can’t be far from here. Perhaps there are more.”

“It’s over here,” cried Lefty, and soon a dozen lanterns and as many little eager groups were searching for the mound of fresh earth. Several times they thought they had discovered it, only to find their mis-

take, and then, oddly enough, Henry came across it.

"But wait," cried Mr. Helmen; "now that we have found it, let's go back to the fire and take a look at the coon we have and let a few dig out this hole. I don't believe it's anything but a ground hog's hole, and I'm crazy to see that coon."

It was agreed, and the procession hurried back to the fire. Happy was unanimously chosen to slip the noose over the coon as Mr. Helmen forced him to the mouth of the bag. It was a moment of eager expectancy. Many of the older fellows, of course, realized that it was a put-up job, but the majority of the new campers never gave it a thought and were eager to see the new mascot.

"I—I—I am ready," panted Happy, his hands so unsteady he could hardly hold the rope in place.

Slowly the lump was forced forward, and then suddenly a furry

head poked its way out the end with an angry fuss—fuss—mia-o-u! Every hair was on end and the claws distended. Happy did his duty like a hero, although he was certain he was about to be pounced upon. To be accurate, the animal was far more frightened than was the boy.

“The cat’s out of the bag!” drawled Texas with a chuckle. “He acted just *like* a coon.”

“Why the bla—blam—blamed thing *is* a cat,” sputtered Happy, “a common t—tom tiger cat;” and then, after a moment’s reflection, he added, “and—and I’m pretty glad he is.”

The crowd went wild with delight, and the new mascot was nearly forgotten for the time being.

Just then the diggers returned to the fire, dragging a heavy sack.

“We have another coon!” cried Henry. “Happy, do you want to muzzle him?” But Happy declined.

"Everybody get in a circle," cried Henry. "I'm going to lasso this one, but not till you are still."

"We have a treat here, due to the kindness and generosity of Mr. Knevels. These are harvest apples." He reached into the bag and began to toss ripe harvest apples about the circle. "We thought first it was a bag of crocodile eggs, but they are just apples. I propose nine rousers for the farm bunch."

They were given with an enthusiasm that made every boy present glad he was a member of Pokokoko.

Of course by now every one realized that the whole event had been prearranged, and wanted to know who was responsible. Foxie saw a chance to have a little more fun, so took the stump and told how Henry's fertile head had conceived the idea, and how he and Texas were just his confederates.

"Best time we have had all sum-

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mer!" shouted some one, and then came nine real rousers for Henry.

The fire was extinguished by shoveling sod on to it. The cat was taken in charge by the farmers, and the party started home, but never to forget that glorious harvest moon.

Henry Ruggles was a happy lad, and all the way home he fairly bubbled over with joy. At last he had been adopted into the gang and felt as one of them.

"Saturday night I get my Efficiency Pennant," he told Mr. Helmen, "and then if I *should* have to go home, I can go happy. Oh, but I'm glad I came to Pokokoko. It's simply great, and it's made a man out of me. Why, I didn't suppose anyone could learn so many new things or get so many inspirations or make so many new friends in two weeks. I wish every city boy in the land could go to a camp," and then, dropping his voice to a

confidential tone, he added, "you know I've decided since I came here to make my life count in the world for big things and I'm going to be a Leader one of these days or bust."

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